

OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE

Albanian Relations With the USSR and Communist China

30 May 1961

The ability of Albania to flaunt Moscow's leadership of the Soviet satellite system in Eastern Europe and yet, at the same time, to remain a member of the Sino-Soviet Bloc, is symbolic of the altered and strained relations between Moscow and Peiping, and reflects the issue of discipline within, and leadership of, the entire Communist world. Also involved in the troubled situation are Albania's relations with and fears of its Balkan neighbors, Yugoslavia and Greece, both of which would welcome any feasible opportunity to intervene.

Preoccupied with the maintenance of domestic order, both public and party, plagued with the most primitive economy in all of Europe, and pathologically suspicious of Yugoslavia, the Albanian leaders have been unhappy with the trend of Soviet policies since the death of Stalin. Inter alia, only lip service--and not much of that--was paid to the post-1954 Soviet bloc campaign to improve relations with Yugoslavia. An opportunity for registering Albania's strong discontent arose in the spring of 1960, when Peiping brought its growing dispute with Moscow into the open. Here, for the first time, was a potential center of support for a militant dissent from Soviet strategy. At both the Soviet-convened

Communist conferences at Bucharest, in June and at Moscow in November, the Albanian leaders, Hoxha and Shehu, unequivocally, and seemingly irrevocably, cast their lot with Peiping.

Since November they have reasserted their displeasure with Moscow on numerous occasions, despite the otherwise relatively quiescent relations between the Soviets and the Chinese. They, alone of all the conferees, sent a second-level delegation to the Warsaw Pact meeting in March. They reiterated their opposition to Soviet policies during an Albanian trades union congress in April and again during May Day celebrations in Tirana. Their latest move against Moscow, however, came this month with the holding of a public trial of ten "traitors and spies" who were charged with seeking--as agents of Greece, Yugoslavia, and the United States--to overthrow the Albanian regime. Testimony during the trial was, in fact, directed against Soviet policies, particularly those toward Yugoslavia. The coup itself, far from being hatched in the Free World, represented--according to all of our evidence--an attempt by the USSR last summer to purge the party of anti-Soviet and pro-Chinese elements.

Since that abortive coup, Moscow has attacked Tirana through economic pressures, innuendo in public speeches, and direct criticisms of the Albanian party by East German leader Ulbricht and Italian Communist

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Party chief Togliatti. Most recently, strained relations may have affected Soviet-Albanian military relations;

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The Chinese Communists, on the other hand, have in many ways indicated their support of the "heretical" Albanian stand. They, for example, replaced Moscow as Albanian's principle supplier of grain, providing about 180,000 tons since last September for credit (as against 70,000 tons from the USSR, at least a part of which required cash)—this despite famine conditions in China. And in late April, they announced a new, long-term Sino-Albanian aid agreement granting \$125,000,000 in credits for Albania's Five Year Plan (1961-1965). These actions substantially reduce the ability of Moscow to apply economic pressure against Tirana.

As a reflection of the larger dispute between Moscow and Peiping, the Albanian problem has almost certainly achieved major proportions in Moscow. The USSR undoubtedly will continue to express its decided displeasure and move, if possible, to eliminate the Albanian problem. Tirana's ability so far to do, in another way, what Hungary failed to do, has almost certainly opened eyes elsewhere in Eastern European parties, particularly among those who would seek greater independence from Moscow and those others who are sympathetic to the leftist orientation of the Chinese.

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